

To the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I oppose HB 5653; AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM GRANTS.

HB 5653 will require lawful gun owners to pay an extra tax yet it doesn't define anywhere precisely how the funds will be utilized. The bill merely refers to Sections 19a-112i and j of the General Statutes as the recipient of the funds generated. What do these Sections refer to? Section 112i only defines the objectives of the Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Program.

Section 112j establishes those who will oversee the program. In reviewing the program administration, I find that it contains 23 members. Of these 23 members, not one is from any group representing the interests of lawful gun owners.

All the members come from organizations related to violence derived from ILLEGAL firearms use. Yet it is the LEGAL and LAW-ABIDING gun owners who are tarred with the brush of criminal firearms activities and are somehow deemed responsible for the illegal acts of criminals most of whom are walking the streets trailing long police records instead of being in prison where they couldn't cause havoc on society.

Connecticut firearms owners already pay an 11% excise tax on ammunition. This tax, authorized by the Pittman-Robertson Act, supports forest and wildlife conservation. In fact, funds generated by the Act supplied over a Billion dollars towards conservation initiatives in 2022.

Lawful firearms owners have been freely contributing to forest and wildlife conservation since Theodore Roosevelt and ALL Connecticut residents have benefited from those monies. Since the prevention of violence also benefits ALL Connecticut residents, then it's only fair that the funds necessary to support the Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Program should be born equally by all Connecticut residents.

Might I suggest that the funds be obtained by adding a new "Anti-violence Initiatives." line item on CT1040 Schedule 5. This will allow all residents to contribute to the Program as their personal finances and beliefs allow.

For these reasons I believe HB 5653 should not receive any further consideration by our Legislature.

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